

## Southern Appalachian Creature Feature Podcasts

### Endangered Species Day

Greetings and welcome to the Southern Appalachian Creature Feature.

It's a little-known day among the litany of spring time holidays and celebrations, but here at the Fish & Wildlife Service, we like to think it important. Overshadowed by Earth Day, its April counterpart, May brings us Endangered Species Day.

I recently had the chance to visit the Atlanta Zoo, and perhaps the cutest thing to be seen was the young panda bear, lounging in its hammock. At the Atlanta Zoo, the pandas have been a tremendous draw. One of the world's most famous endangered species, pandas receive a lot of conservation support – both actual and moral, and it's easy to see why.

However, the Southern Appalachians are home to several endangered species that receive far less attention than the panda. Indeed, you may not have heard of many of our endangered species. The spruce-fir moss spider, the world's smallest tarantula, is found in the spruce-fir forests of our highest mountains. The Appalachian elktoe is a freshwater mussel found nearly exclusively in western North Carolina. These are but two of numerous endangered plants and animals across the region.

May 20th is Endangered Species Day, a time to reflect on the state of our rarest plants and animals. This year, let's take a moment to think, not about pandas or whales, but about the rare species of the Southern Appalachians, here in our own back yard, and what we can do to help them.

For WNCW and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, this is Gary Peeples